

REMARKS

This paper responds to the Office Action dated December 19, 2003.

Information disclosure statements. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesy extended in providing initialed and dated substitute Forms 1449, namely:

- 1449 for reference Aizawa K et al.
- 1449 for US Pat. No. 4,734,776 and three other references

Drawings. The Examiner has attached Form 948 finding fault with Figure 3. Replacement figure 3 is enclosed.

Section headings. The Examiner asks that section headings be inserted in the application. This has been done in this amendment.

Objection to claim 1. The Examiner objects to claim 1 because of language in lines 7 and 8 of the claim.

The following comments are respectfully offered in response to the Examiner's objection to claim 1.

Consider first the situation in which, in step (a), the first subset of pixels consists of only one pixel. In a first interrogation run, the pixel is reset, exposed, and its output *value* (note that this term is in the singular) is read out. The same procedure is performed in a second interrogation run. In step (b), the two output *values* (note that this term is in the plural), that is, the output value from the first run and the output value from the second run are combined.

Then consider the situation in which, in step (a), the first subset of pixels consists of a plurality of pixels. In such a situation, the plural must be used already in step (a).

In order to cover both situations, the claim has been drafted intentionally using the expression output value(s)" (namely, the singular or the plural) in step (a).

It is hoped that with this explanation, the Examiner will agree that the language is not indefinite.

Rejection of claim 9. The Examiner rejects claim 9 because of a limitation "longer exposure."

So as to help with explanation of claim 9, a drawing is attached. The drawing shows the time management for 256 pixels in a representation that differs from that of Figure 3 of the application as filed. As can be seen, during the long exposure (exposure 1) of pixel number 255, steps (b) are performed for all other pixels numbers 0 to 254. This is exactly the situation set forth in claim 9.

Objection to claim 6. The Examiner objects to claim 6 because of a limitation "the processing" in line 1. Claim 6 has been amended to respond to this objection.

Rejection over Dierickx et al. U.S. Pat. No. 6,011,251 ("Dierickx"). It is noted that the Examiner has stated that claim 11 is allowable if recast in independent form. To this end, applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the features of claim 7, 8, 10, and 11. It is suggested that this change should render claim 1 allowable.

As a consequence, all claims dependent upon claim 1 are suggested to be allowable for the same reasons, namely claims 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 have been amended to delete reference numbers from the claims.

Claims 7, 8, 9 and 10 have been canceled.

Allowability of claims 11-12. The Examiner states that claims 11-12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, incorporating the limitations of the claims from which claims 11-

12 depend.

This has been done in the present amendment and allowance of claims 11-12 is respectfully requested.

New claims. New claim 17, patterned after claim 12, has been added which depends from claim 1.

It appears to the applicant that none of the cited references shows or makes obvious the limitations of claim 9. For this reason, new independent claim 18 is presented which is intended to include features of claims 1, 7, 8, and 9. Allowance of claim 18 is requested.

Depending from claim 18 are dependent claims 19 through 24, allowance of which is likewise requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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